



# **Election Observer Program San Mateo County**

## **I. County and System Information**

Contact: Narda Garcia

Phone: (650) 312-5365

Vendor and Voting System: Hart InterCivic eSlate Voting System

Date: 1/4/08

## **II. Purpose**

The purpose of an Election Observer Program is to:

1. Provide an avenue for public observation of and input into the election process.
2. Assist in ensuring the integrity of the election process.
3. Encourage participation and build voter confidence in the election process.

## **III. Invite**

At E-30 we prepared and sent letters and e-mails inviting the following groups to observe our ballot processing and polling place processes:

1. County Grand Jury
2. Political Party Officers
3. Advocacy Groups
4. League of Women Voters
5. Media
6. Candidates
7. Jurisdictions with Candidates and/or Measures on the ballot

Other groups or individuals expressing an interest in observing Election Day activities may also be included in the observer panel.

## **IV. Appointment Letters (for introduction to precinct workers)**

After the groups have provided the names of interested panelists, prepare letters of introduction for the panelist to use when visiting polling places on election day. Materials to be prepared for each panelist will include a listing of all polling places within the county for this election as well as the central counting site location and hours of operation.

## **V. Mechanism for Feedback**

Observers that "register" with the County will be encouraged to provide feedback on their experience.



## Rules for Election Observers San Mateo County

### **Observers may:**

- Observe the proceedings at the polls, including opening and closing procedures.
- Obtain information from the precinct index that is posted near the entrance.
- Make notes and watch all procedures.
- View all activities at the central counting site on Election Day.
- View the canvass of the vote activities following the election.
- View mail ballot and provisional ballot processing.
- Ask questions of staff or voters at the polls.
- Ask questions of supervisors at the central counting site.

### **Observers are responsible for:**

- Checking in at each site, whether polling place or central counting site.
- Wearing an identification badge.
- Maintaining a professional manner while observing the election processes.
- Ensuring they do not interfere with the elections process.

### **Observers may not:**

- Interfere in any way with the conduct of the election.
- Touch any voting materials or equipment or sit at the official worktables.
- Converse with voters (within 100 feet of the entrance to a polling place) regarding the casting of a vote, or speak to a voter regarding his/her qualifications to vote.
- Display any election material or wear campaign badges, buttons or apparel.
- Wear the uniform of a peace officer, a private guard, or security personnel.
- Use cellular phones, pagers, or two-way radios inside the polling place and/or within 100 feet of the entrance of the polling place.
- Talk to central counting site workers while they are processing ballots.
- Touch election personnel.
- Eat or drink in the polls or the central counting site.
- Assist in operations at any polling place.

## **SAMPLE LETTER OF INVITATION**

Date

Dear X:

As the San Mateo County Chief Elections Officer, I am committed to an open and transparent election process. We have instituted procedures, policies, and a public information campaign to help voters better understand what is involved in the conduct of an election in San Mateo County to ensure the accuracy, security and reliability of their vote. It is my sincere hope that we will increase voter confidence in the process with greater access and transparency.

One of these efforts is our Election Observer Panel Program. This program allows interested parties to witness the conduct of elections from beginning to end. I am writing today to invite members of your organization to participate as observers in this very important Presidential Election Cycle.

Some of you have participated in previous elections as an observer, and for this, I am most grateful. There are many items of interest for observers; the processing of mail ballots, polling place voting, central vote count, and the official canvass.

If your organization would like to be represented on the Election Observer Panel, please contact our Elections Supervisor, Narda Garcia, at (650) 312-5365 or email her at [ngarcia@smcare.org](mailto:ngarcia@smcare.org) to register as an election observer. Please respond by Tuesday, January 29, 2008.

Thank you for your interest and your commitment to fair, open, and secure elections.

Sincerely,

Warren Slocum  
Chief Elections Officer &  
Assessor-County Clerk-Recorder

Enclosure: Observer Guidelines

## **SAMPLE LETTER OF INTRODUCTION**

Date

TO: Precinct Inspector

FROM: Warren Slocum  
Chief Elections Officer,  
Assessor-County Clerk-Recorder

SUBJECT: ELECTION OBSERVER PANEL

This letter introduces XXX, who is on the Election Observer Panel for the February 5, 2008 election. As you know from attending the poll worker training courses, observers are one of many components that help to make elections more transparent and secured. Members of the Election Observer Panel are invited to observe activities related to an election, including visiting polling places.

During their observation, members of the Election Observer Panel and other observers may ask you to explain certain operations and procedures. Please extend every courtesy to them as you would any voter. However, no person, including a member of the Election Observer Panel, may interfere with the act of voting and the operation of polling places.

If you have any questions before, during, or after observers have visited your precinct, please call Greta McElroy at (650) 312-5389.

Thank you for your cooperation and your terrific service to our county's voters.